

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 EUR-25 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 (ISO) W

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R 291251Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0278

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8826

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, ET

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: ADDIS ABABA 8566

1. IN COURSE OF JULY 26 CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN ZEWDE ON TEN-NECO CAPTIVES (ADDIS 8800), HE DISCUSSED BRIEFLY IEG POLICY TOWARDS ERITREA. HE SAID HE AND MANY OTHERS HAD BEEN URGING FORMER PRIMIN ENDELKACHEW THAT ONLY WAY TO ALTER IEG'S ERITREAN POLICY WAS TO PLACE OFFICIALS IN ERITREA WHO WERE PREPARED CARRY OUT POLICY ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM PAST. ZEWDE HAD SAID ANNOUNCEMENTS OF POLICY CHANGES TOWARDS ERITREA WERE NOTHING NEW AND WOULD BE MEANINGLESS UNTIL OFFICIALS SUCH AS FORMER GOVGEN OF ERITREA HAD BEEN REMOVED. ZEWDE AGAIN DISCUSSED POLICY TOWARDS ERITREA WITH ENDELKACHEW A FEW HOURS BEFORE LATTER WAS REMOVED AND URGED THAT A 4-5 MAN HIGH LEVEL TEAM BE SENT TO ERITREA. TEAM'S TASK WOULD BE TO "FIND OUT WHAT SITUATION REALLY IS" AND MAKE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRIMIN. ZEWDE SAID HE WILL URGE SUCH ACTION UPON NEW PRIMIN AND BELIEVES IT WILL BE TAKEN.

2. WHEN ASKED BY CANADIAN CHARGE' WHETHER CHANGE OF PRIMINS WOULD CAUSE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES IN IEG POLICY, ZEWDE REPLIED IN NEGATIVE. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT GOVERNMENT NO LONGER IS IN VERY AWKWARD SITUATION WHERE ALL PREVIOUS CABINET MINIS-
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TERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON GROUNDS THEY WERE COLLECTIVELY RESPON-

SIBLE FOR CORRUPTION AND MALADMINISTRATION, EXCEPT FOR ONE WHO HAD BEEN MADE PRIMIN.

3. AS FOR ENTRY INTO FORCE OF NEW CONSTITUTION, ZEWDE THOUGHT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE SUBMITTED TO CABINET IN ABOUT 10 DAYS AND THAT CABINET AND EMPEROR WOULD CONSIDER IT FOR 3-4 WEEKS BEFORE SUBMITTING IT TO PARLIAMENT. AT ONE POINT HE SAID THAT PRESENT TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO FUNCTION UNTIL NEW CONSTITUTION GOES INTO EFFECT, BUT AT ANOTHER HE INDICATED IT WOULD LAST UNTIL "THE NEW ELECTIONS".

4. IN VERY BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH ZEWDE AFTER DEPARTURE OF CANADIAN CHARGE' AND UNDP REPRESENTATIVE, I INFORMED HIM THAT USG HAD RESPONDED IN A MANNER FAVORABLE FOR IEG TO IRANIAN GOVERNMENT'S INQUIRY RE US VIEWS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. ZEWDE SAID SHAH HAD BEEN MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT RELATIONSHIP OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL SITUATION AND THAT HE (ZEWDE) WOULD LIKE DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH ME SOON. I SAID I WOULD BE GLAD DO SO AT HIS CONVENIENCE.
WYMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, CABINET, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ADDIS08826
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740205-0645
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740711/aaaaaize.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ADDIS ABABA 8566
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <24 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMENTS ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY FOREIGN MINISTER
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, ET, (ZEWDE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005